

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (currently amended) An automatic paper feed apparatus comprising:
a feed roller for automatically feeding papers, when the papers are contained in a cassette
in a stacked state, in order from an uppermost one of the papers; and

a ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet constructed and arranged to be positioned on the
uppermost one of the papers such that when said feed roller automatically feeds the uppermost
one of the papers a friction force exists between said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet and the
uppermost one of the papers, with

(i) that component of the friction force resulting from said ~~holding member~~
flexible sheet being generated solely from a weight of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet and a
coefficient of friction of a surface of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet that contacts the
uppermost one of the papers, and

(ii) the friction force being weaker than a friction force existing between said feed
roller and the uppermost one of the papers.

Claim 7 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim
6, further comprising:

an engagement portion on a rear end portion of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet,
wherein said engagement portion is constructed and arranged to be engaged with the cassette
such that said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet becomes attached to the cassette so as to be slidable
in a paper feed direction.

Claim 8 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to
claim 7, wherein

said engagement portion is constructed and arranged to be engaged with the cassette by
being constructed and arranged to be engaged with a guide member in the cassette, which guide
member is to guide rear ends of the papers.

Claim 9 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the papers are medicine bags.

Claim 10 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, ~~wherein said holding member has a form of a sheet, and~~ further comprising:

a first conductive layer on a top surface of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet; and
a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet,
with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim ~~11~~ 6, wherein

said flexible sheet is constructed and arranged to contact a paper immediately adjacent the uppermost one of the papers as the uppermost one of the papers is being fed by said feed roller.

Claim 13 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim ~~11~~ 6, wherein

said flexible sheet comprises a urethane rubber flexible sheet or a silicon rubber flexible sheet.

Claim 14 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim ~~11~~ 6, wherein

said flexible sheet is constructed and arranged to simultaneously contact the uppermost one of the papers and a paper immediately adjacent the uppermost one of the papers, as the uppermost one of the papers is being fed by said feed roller.

Claim 15 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

a mechanism for allowing said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet to slidably move in a direction of thickness of the papers, when in the cassette in the stacked state, in response to the weight of ~~the holding member~~ said flexible sheet, and for limiting movement of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet in a paper feed direction.

Claim 16 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 15, wherein

said mechanism comprises

(i) a guide member to be fixed to the cassette so as to extend in the direction of thickness of the papers when in the cassette in the stacked state, and

(ii) a through hole, in said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet, through which said guide member is to be loosely inserted.

Claim 17 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

said guide member is on a rear side of the papers when in the cassette in the stacked state.

Claim 18 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 16, wherein

said through hole is in a rear end of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet.

Claim 19 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each of the papers is of a differing thickness.

Claim 20 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 19, wherein each of the papers comprises a bag having folded portions.

Claim 21 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the bag is a medicine bag.

Claim 22 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein
said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet is flaccid.

Claim 23 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 22, wherein
said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet comprises a urethane rubber flexible sheet or a silicon rubber flexible sheet.

Claim 24 (previously presented) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising:
a first conductive layer on a top surface of said urethane rubber sheet or silicon rubber sheet; and
a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said urethane rubber sheet or silicon rubber sheet,
with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.

Claim 25 (currently amended) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising:
a first conductive layer on a top surface of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet; and
a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said ~~holding member~~ flexible sheet,
with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.